411 "Their weapons comprise arrows, spear and club, and those who cannot procure iron spears attach a sharp piece of deer antler to
721 the end of a pole. Their occupations are limited to a little hunting;
262 to fishing, to which end in some places they customarily make nets of
[227] garabata fiber; to gathering a few wild fruits, and to loafing. For this reason their food consists of a little meat from the wild animals they hunt, fish and fruits. These latter they gather abundantly during some months of the year, although the variety is limited mainly to the fruit of the chañar, mistol, and algarrobo. Fish is also plentiful in certain seasons. Game, on the other hand, is relatively scarce but they eat anything which is in any way similar to meat with relish, such as small lizards, crickets, locusts and mice (1) so that although

1. That is: cavies, which are very good to eat when fat (J.P.)

they do get rather thin in certain months by reason of the scarceness
231 of food, no one dies of starvation. Some, but [600] very few, raise sheep and other domestic animals. In any event, when times are hard, and even when they are not so hard, the frontier Christians have pretty large cattle herds, herds which often help the Matacos out when food is scarce, and this with little effort. Most of them refrain from
241 agricultural pursuits because that would involve too much work (in the Mataco opinion), except for some perfunctory sowing of pumpkins which grow with astonishing ease in those parts and in such abundance and such high quality that some frontier people, with a little exaggeration, used to tell me that they were so delicious that it was a pleasure to see and taste them and that their honey-like sweetness was such that when one wished to cut one open the knife would become stuck fast in them. I observed that while these people were telling me about the pumpkins their mouths would begin to water, so much so that I was almost persuaded to go off and live in those places where such delicious and mellifluous pumpkins grew and multiplied so easily."

273 "From wild fruits and even from pumpkins and watermelons they
579 make a fermented beverage which they like very much but which intoxicates them powerfully; and in their fury they join in some very bloody frays. This is why the women abstain completely from drinking that beverage and hide their husbands' weapons during those periods

273 when the drink excites them too much and infuriates them. In this
579 way many wounds and deaths are avoided, yet in spite of it they are frequent."

273 "The fruit which they most commonly use to make their brews
●221 is the algarrobo pod, which is quite sweet and nutritious and probably the most abundant fruit in those regions. When the season for this fruit is in the offing it would seem that new life, happiness and pleasure are born, and the Indians prepare for it by putting on a show to get everyone to make ready for the coming of the happy and much sighed for season."

222 "To this effect, when the pods of the algarrobo start to turn
535 yellow they place a wooden mortar in front of their dwellings, and
789 cover it with a half tanned sheep skin or the skin of some other animal. One of them, with a piece of cord or leather thong bound about his waist from which hang a number of shells, horns and small bones, and other things which will make a little noise, starts [601] to pound with a small stick on the mortar, which they call pimpin and which takes the place of a drum. This drummer accompanies the blows dealt to the pimpin with divers body movements, half dancing but rooted to the spot, in such a manner that the objects which hang from his waist make a tambourine-like sound, something like the rattling of empty nutshells; singing meanwhile out loud but in a sad monotonous way—one would say that they fear some great calamity or are asking for help in a grim battle. The fact of the matter is that day and night, without ceasing, the low hollow sounds of the pimpin must be made, together with the rattling of the wild tambourine and the shouts or lamentations of the sorrowful singer—and all this they say is to bring about the quicker and better ripening of the desired fruit. That is why, when the singer-musician tires, another immediately replaces him.

342 "The houses of the Matacos are altogether too small and uncomfortable, but they make them so on purpose for they are thus able to husband time and fatigue, preferring ease in building to living comfort. They cut a couple of saplings or thin branches, bend them and stick the ends into the ground in the form of two crossed arches, tie a few handsful of straw to them and the house is finished. The entrance is low and narrow and one must enter on all fours. The appearance of the hut is that of an oven two or three yards in diameter. If the cutting of a few boughs looms difficult to them, then they cut several canes,

101 131 of the Salado (1) River to the Pilcomayo, hemmed in towards the

1. From Matará northwards.

mountains by tribes of Quichua influence and others, and in the direction of the Río de la Plata by nations of the Toba-Guaycurú type. This vast region was bounded on the north by Chiriguano territory, and on the south by the Quichuas and Pampas of the Guaycurú-Querandí type.

It appears at present that the basin of the Salado River ceased 174 to be territory of the nomad Matacos who, in the past century, were replaced by the Mocovíes and other tribes of a more definite Guycurú type. Lozano in his first volume and on page 175 (Lamas Ed.) says that "gasta" means town in the Tonocoté language. This being the case these tribes must have entered the valleys of Yocavil and Londres also, for all the Andean region is full of places whose names end in "gasta" (2). According to my observations "gasta" is as Cacan a word

2. In none of the Mataco-Mataguayo dialects does the term "gasta" appear.

as is "ao."

In any case one thing must needs be conceded and that is that the Mataco tribes had shifted towards the southwest up to the Aconquija range. [611]

● 221 The Matacos, like the Tobas and other Guaycurú nations are and were nomads, and of course one cannot indicate exactly the areas frequented by them when they were on the move; at one time they would go in one direction, at another in another, according to pressure from more warlike tribes or from the Spaniards.

221 All agree that after the Spanish conquest numerous tribes of 174 Matacos or Tonocotes withdrew towards the Pilcomayo River basin and this is exactly what would have been expected because there they were less exposed to Spanish raiders who would carry off any Indian they found to forced labor; these they used to call piezas "pieces of ordinance"--Translator].